

## Chief Magistrate Judge Tsuchida

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

IN THE MATTER OF THE  
EXTRADITION OF  
KARL ALBERT ERNEST PFEFFER

CASE NO. MJ21-262

COMPLAINT FOR EXTRADITION

(18 U.S.C. §3184)

I, Karyn S. Johnson, the undersigned Assistant United States Attorney, being duly sworn, state on information and belief that the following is true and correct:

1. In this matter, I represent the United States in fulfilling its treaty obligation to the Republic of Poland (“Poland”).

2. There is an extradition treaty in force between the United States and Poland:

The Extradition Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland, U.S.-Pol., July 10, 1996, S. TREATY DOC. NO. 105-14 (1997), and the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland on the application of the Extradition Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland signed 10 July 1996, U.S.-Pol., June 9, 2006, S. TREATY DOC. NO. 109-14 (2006) (collectively, “the Treaty”).

3. Article 12 of the Treaty provides for the provisional arrest and detention of alleged fugitives pending the submission of a formal request for extradition and

1 supporting documents.

2       4. Pursuant to the Treaty, Poland has submitted a request for the provisional arrest  
3 with a view towards extradition of Karl Albert Ernest Pfeffer (“Karl Pfeffer”).

4       5. According to the information provided by the Government of Poland, Karl  
5 Pfeffer is suspected of committing murder in violation of Article 148 § 1 of the Polish  
6 Criminal Code.<sup>1</sup>

7       6. This offense was committed within the jurisdiction of Poland. On April 28,  
8 2021, the District Court Warszawa-Zoliborz in Warsaw, III Criminal Division, granted  
9 the prosecutor’s request for the pretrial detention of Karl Pfeffer in preliminary  
10 proceedings on the murder charge. On the same day, an all-points bulletin was issued for  
11 Karl Pfeffer’s arrest.

12       7. The provisional arrest request presents the following facts as the basis for the  
13 criminal charge and arrest warrant:

14           a) Beginning in approximately November 2016, Gretchen Evita Pfeffer  
15 (the “victim”) lived with her son Karl Pfeffer in a rented apartment at 10B Heroldow  
16 Street in Warsaw, Poland.

17           b) According to statements made by the victim’s friends to Polish  
18 investigators, Gretchen Pfeffer was social, intelligent, and communicative. She did not  
19 work and had a lot of free time, during which she enjoyed talking and being with people.  
20 She often stopped by her neighbors’ homes to talk, and maintained constant, virtually  
21 daily contact with friends by phone and electronic communications, through which she  
22 held lengthy conversations.

23           c) According to witness statements, the relationship between Gretchen

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25       <sup>1</sup> The United States is seeking a warrant for Karl Pfeffer’s provisional arrest based only  
26 on the murder charge. Poland has requested Karl Pfeffer’s provisional arrest on an additional  
27 charge, and the United States’ decision to proceed in urgent circumstances on this select charge  
28 is without prejudice to proceeding on the additional charge when Poland submits its formal  
request for extradition.

1 Pfeffer and her son, Karl Pfeffer, was strained. Karl Pfeffer refused to work and was  
2 financially supported by his mother. Karl Pfeffer abused drugs. One of Gretchen's  
3 friends, E.C., told investigators that Gretchen Pfeffer confided in her that Karl Pfeffer had  
4 hit her on the head with a frying pan during one of their arguments.

5 d) On May 18, 2020, B.M. lodged a report at the Municipal Police  
6 Headquarters that Gretchen Pfeffer was missing. The police investigated her  
7 disappearance and concluded that on March 31, 2020 or April 1, 2020, Karl Pfeffer killed  
8 his mother Gretchen in her Warsaw apartment.

9 e) Gretchen Pfeffer was last seen before March 31, 2020. From that day  
10 on, all in-person contact with her friends stopped, and the occasional social media post or  
11 message sent from her phone was strikingly different from Gretchen's typical style of  
12 speech and the way she wrote. In mid-April 2020, M.M., the owner of the apartment  
13 rented by Gretchen Pfeffer, along with a real estate agent, entered Gretchen's apartment,  
14 and discovered that items belonging to the tenants were missing.

15 f) The investigation revealed that after moving from his mother's  
16 apartment, Karl Pfeffer stayed in Warsaw, in apartments he rented using his mother's  
17 payment cards and bank accounts until they were blocked by his family.

18 g) On September 13, 2020, officers of the District Police Headquarters  
19 received information that Karl Pfeffer had contacted his half-sister, Michelle Pfeffer, and  
20 informed her that he had killed his mother, dismembered her corpse, and thrown her in  
21 pieces into the river.

22 h) The investigation revealed that on April 1, 2020, Karl Pfeffer bought a  
23 handsaw, repair tape, two thick paint films, grease and five meters of one-meter high  
24 metal fencing mesh at Leroy Merlin, Arkadia Shopping Mall. In addition, an analysis of  
25 Karl's phone log-ins, and Uber and myTaxi data, indicated that on April 3, 2020, Karl  
26 traveled three times in the vicinity of the Jozef Pilsudski Bridge over the Vistula River.

27 i) On April 4, 2020, a post appeared on Gretchen's Facebook profile stating  
28 that Gretchen was in Seattle, although there was no record of her departure from Europe

or arrival in the United States.

j) On October 15, 2020, Karl Pfeffer flew from Gdansk, Poland to Amsterdam, Netherlands, and then to the United States.

k) The analysis of Gretchen Pfeffer's bank accounts revealed that Karl Pfeffer used her credit cards after her mother went missing until they were blocked. This analysis corresponds with the statement made to investigators by Karl Pfeffer's girlfriend, I.B.K., who said that in August 2020 Karl Pfeffer asked her to call the bank and use his mother's documents to try to unlock the accounts.

l) On April 12 and 13, 2021, FBI agents interviewed Karl Pfeffer, during which Karl Pfeffer confessed to the murder of his mother, describing his actions in detail, including dumping her dismembered corpse into the Vistula River.

8. The offense with which Karl Pfeffer is charged is provided for in Article 2 of the Treaty.

9. Karl Pfeffer can be found within the jurisdiction of this Court at 2600 SW Holden St. Seattle, Washington.

10. The Government of Poland has represented that it will submit a formal request for extradition supported by the documents specified in the Treaty, within the time required under the Treaty.

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COMPLAINT FOR EXTRADITION – 4  
USAO # 2021V00410

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
700 STEWART STREET, SUITE 5220  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101  
(206) 553-7970

1 WHEREFORE, the undersigned requests that a warrant for the arrest of the  
2 aforesigned person be issued in accordance with the extradition treaty between the United  
3 States and Poland and 18 U.S.C. § 3184.

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6 KARYN S. JOHNSON  
7 Assistant United States Attorney

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9 The above-named attorney provided a sworn statement attesting to the truth of the  
10 foregoing Complaint by telephone on this 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021.

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13 BRIAN A. TSUCHIDA  
14 Chief United States Magistrate Judge